Why a Prevention and Cost Control Trust?

Prevention can control medical costs by saving nearly half a billion dollars each year in Massachusetts.
- A 5% reduction in chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension can save us nearly 500 million dollars annually, as reported in a study published in January 2011.

We can prevent costly diseases and improve the health of children and families by funding community-based health programs such as:
- Home-based programs that change the indoor environment to reduce asthma triggers
- Community-based programs to increase and improve neighborhood space for physical activity
- School-based programs that make nutritious foods more accessible and extend time for physical activity during the school day
- Community-based programs to reduce tobacco use

Voters overwhelmingly support investing in prevention, according to a recent national poll. The 2009 poll, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Trust for America’s Health, found that 71 percent of Americans support “providing people with information and resources and creating policies that help people make healthier decisions.”

How will it work?

The Prevention and Cost Control Trust will provide a stable source of funding for the types of community health programs that can prevent disease and cut health care costs.
- Grants will fund community-based interventions to reduce the most costly preventable diseases that affect the most people or burden certain communities.

Strong oversight and evaluation will ensure that funds are allocated effectively throughout the state.
- Municipalities, regional collaborations, and nonprofits that coordinate with a municipality will be eligible for grants. An Oversight Board will ensure that funds are allocated in ways that best address the most prevalent health conditions in the state and do not duplicate existing Department of Public Health programs.
- A surcharge of less than 1% on Health Safety Net Surcharge Payers would establish the Trust.

Join us!

Sign on to endorse the bill by contacting Maddie Ribble at 617-524-6696 x111 or MRibble@MPHAweb.org
Prevention Works!

Payment reform needs community-based prevention to succeed.

Community-based prevention can save Massachusetts half a billion dollars each year. Reducing the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension by a mere 5% would lead to large decreases in medical costs within only a few years. Much of the high costs of these diseases lie in treating their complications – such as heart disease, stroke, and renal disease. By avoiding these complications, Massachusetts could begin saving $450.4 million per year within 5 years.1

Instead of funding programs to keep people healthy, our health care system focuses on treating people after they’ve gotten sick.

Three quarters of our health care dollars are spent treating preventable chronic diseases – but only 4 percent of health care spending goes towards preventing these conditions.2, 3 We’ll never reduce health costs until we start keeping people healthier. Each year, Massachusetts loses billions of dollars due to preventable conditions, including:

- $1.8 billion on obesity-related medical costs4
- $3.72 billion on productivity losses due to asthma5
- $4.3 billion on medical treatment costs for diabetes6
- $17 billion on productivity losses stemming from obesity5
- $3.5 billion on inpatient hospital care from cardiovascular disease7

We have the tools we need to prevent disease and cut health care costs. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals have confirmed the effectiveness of many community-based health promotion programs. These evidenced-based programs are proven to reduce weight gain, increase healthy eating and physical activity, reduce smoking, and cut risk of heart disease.

- Home-based environmental interventions for children with asthma are successful in reducing symptoms and decreasing missed school days. Trained personnel visit the home to assess and change the indoor environment to reduce exposure to asthma triggers, including allergens and irritants. 
- Shape Up Somerville: Eat Smart. Play Hard, is an intervention that has reduced weight gain in children, reducing their risk for chronic disease later in life. The innovative strategy improved school nutrition and increased opportunities for kids to be active before, during, and after the school day.
- The Greater Lawrence Family Health Center conducted extensive outreach efforts to community members to help them learn how to prevent and control diabetes through diet and physical activity. Within five years, the number of patients with their diabetes under control had more than doubled.

To learn more, contact Maddie Ribble at 617-524-6696 x111 or MRibble@MPHAweb.org.

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2. Center for Disease Control. Chronic disease: The power to prevent, a call to control. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/chronic.htm